

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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-----180927Z 076488 /15

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1877  
INFO USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EEWT, PFOR, CSCE, CZ  
SUBJECT: E/C COUNSELOR VISIT TO OSTRAVA AND BRNO

REF A. PRAGUE 0148, B. PRAGUE 0104, C. PRAGUE 0020

1. SUMMARY: IN ADDITION TO ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL RESULTS COVERED SEPARATELY, EMBASSY REPORTS ON MORE GENERAL FINDINGS OF E/C COUNSELORS THREE AND ONE HALF DAY AUTO TRIP TO OSTRAVA AND BRNO. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH APPROVAL AND SOME COOPERATION OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, E/C COUNSELOR (ACCOMPANIED BY COMMERCIAL FSL) VISITED INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES AND OFFICES IN OSTRAVA AND BRNO JANUARY 11-13. ENTITIES VISITED WERE: VITKOVICE STEEL AND ENGINEERING WORKS OF KLEMENT GOTTWALD (VZKG) IN OSTRAVA; NEW METALLURGICAL WORKS OF KLEMENT GOTTWALD (HNKG) IN KUNICE, NEAR OSTRAVA; ZBROJOVKA TRUST IN BRNO; AND CHEPOS TRUST IN BRNO. MFA SSID IT WAS UNABLE TO ARRANGE CALLS WE REQUESTED IN GOTTWALDOV ON RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF GROUND CONSTRUCTION AND RUBBER AND PLASTICS MANUFACTURING TRUST, ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE OF SCHEDULEING PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, GOTTWALDOV CALLS WERE THE LEAST SIGNIFICANT ON THE LIST FROM EMBASSY'S VIEWPOINT, AS MFA MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE REALIZED.

3. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER ON COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF THIS TRIP.  
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REF A HAS ALREADY COVERED ONE SIGNIFICANT RESULT OF VZKG VISIT, I.E., REQUEST BY COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR SUCHANEK FOR USG VIEWS ON POSSIBLE VISITS OF CZECHOSLOVAK EXPERTS TO U.S. FACTORIES PRODUCING NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL POWER PLANTS AND METALLURGICAL EQUIPMENT.

4. FOLLOWING ITEMS OF MORE GENERAL INTEREST ALSO EMERGED FROM

TRIP:

(A) AS PART OF EMBASSY'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO EXPAND OUR ACCESS TO LOCAL OFFICIALS AND FACILITIES (REF C), WE WROTE MFA ON NOVEMBER 30 REQUESTING APPROVAL AND ASSISTANCE FOR JANUARY 11-13 TRIP.

EXCEPT FOR GOTTWALDOV VISITS (PARA 2) MFA MET OUR REQUESTS IN RELATIVELY (FOR LOCAL BUREAUCRATS) SHORT TIME.

(B) WHEREAS TWO BRNO CALLS WERE CONFINED TO HOUR LONG COMMERCIAL DISCUSSIONS IN OFFICES OF GENERAL DIRECTORATES, VZKG AND NHKG VISITS WERE MUCH MORE MUCH MORE INFORMATIVE. WELCOME WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL, ESPECIALLY AT VZKG, AND E/C COUNSELOR WAS ALLOWED TO SPEND ABOUT TWO HOURS AT EACH COMPLEX ACTUALLY TOURING STEEL-MAKING AND RELATED FACILITIES. ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR AND OTHER CHIEFS OF MISSION WERE ALLOWED TO SEE INSIDE SOME VITKOVICE FACILITIES DURING MFA-ORGANIZED GROUP TOUR LAST SUMMER, THIS WAS FIRST INSTANCE IN RECENT TIMES THAT ANY INDIVIDUAL EMBOFF HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO TOUR WORKING AREAS OF THESE PLANTS, WHICH GOC CONSIDER TO BE SENSITIVE. (IN 1974 VISIT TO VZKG AND NHKG, THEN E/C OFFICER WAS PERMITTED TO VISIT ONLY OFFICE AREAS.) AT NHKG, E/C COUNSELOR WAS ASKED TO PICK AREAS OF PLANT HE WANTED TO SEE. OBVIOUSLY, CZECHOSLOVAKS WOULD NOT ALLOW EMBOFF TO SEE FACILITIES THEY CONSIDERED TO BE HIGHLY SENSITIVE. HOWEVER, RELATIVELY OPEN ACCESS PROVIDED BY VZKG AND NHKG HOSTS WAS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY SINCE TIMING OF VISIT COINCIDED WITH SPY CASE OF GROHMAN AND OTHERS IN OSTRAVA AND WITH GOC'S ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN FEATURING U.S. DEFECTORS ROHRER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND BLACK (REF B).

(C) IN GENERAL TERMS, E/C COUNSELOR SAW NO VISIBLE SIGNS OF DISCONTENT AMONG VZKG AND NHKG WORKERS, WHO APPEARED LESS APATHETIC THAN IS TYPICALLY ASSUMED BY FOREIGN OBSERVERS. EMBOFF WAS ALLOWED TO TALK FREELY IN CZECH WITH VARIOUS WORKERS, SOME OF LESS THAN SUPERVISORY RANK, AND TO HAND OUT A FEW U.S. BICENTENNIAL LAPEL PINS. WORKER SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS SEEMED APALLINGLY LOW, AND MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT WAS OBVIOUSLY ANTIQUATED. THE ONLY PERSON WHO APPEARED TO NOTICE THE UBIQUITOUS AGITPROP BANNERS FESTOONING PLANT INTERIORS AND PROCLAIMING STALE COMMUNIST SLOGANS WAS THE VISITING AMERICAN.

(D) IN THE MANY VILLAGES AND PROVINCIAL CITIES TRAVERSED IN COURSE OF THIS 3 AND ONE HALF DAY ROAD TRIP, SHOPS SEEMED FULL OF SALEABLE GOODS AND QUEUES FAR SHORTER AND LESS COMMON THAN IN PRAGUE. GENERAL IMPRESSION, CORROBORATED BY RECENT EXPERIENCES OF OTHER EMBOFFS OUTSIDE PRAGUE, WAS ONE OF GENERAL TRANQUILITY AS WELL-FED MORAVIANS AND BOHEMIANS MUDDLE THROUGH A COLDER THAN

USUAL WINTER. NEWSWORTHY POLITICAL EVENTS ABSORBING THE INTERESTS  
OF WESTERN DIPLOMATS IN PRAGUE (CHARTER 77, SPY CASE AND ANTI-  
WESTERN PROPAGANDA BARRAGES) SEEMED OF VERY LITTLE CONCERN  
TO VARIOUS OFFICIAL AND ORDINARY CZECHS WITH WHOM  
E/C COUNSELOR SPOKE.  
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## Message Attributes

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